United Nations A/68/208

General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 July 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 69 of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights

National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

In its resolution 66/169, entitled "National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report, covering the period September 2012 to September 2013, contains information on the activities undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish and strengthen national human rights institutions; measures taken by Governments and national human rights institutions in this regard; support provided to international and regional activities of national human rights institutions; technical assistance provided to and on national human rights institutions, together with other United Nations agencies and programmes; and cooperation between national human rights institutions and international mechanisms to promote and protect human rights. Information regarding the work on and support to national human rights institutions by international and regional organizations is also included.

The present report complements the report of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council of 2 April 2013 (A/HRC/23/27), which covers activities for the period April 2012 to March 2013.

* A/68/150.

** All references to Kosovo in the present report, whether to the territory, institutions or population, are to be construed in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 66/169 of 19 December 2011 on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report covers the period from September 2012 to September 2013, and complements the report of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council of 2 April 2013 (A/HRC/23/27), which covered the period from April 2012 to March 2013.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/169, highlighted the role of independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in working together with Governments to ensure full respect for human rights at the national level, and in supporting cooperation between Governments and the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights. The resolution commended the high priority given by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to national human rights institutions. Accordingly, in the period under review, OHCHR provided advice and assistance for strengthening national human rights institutions in 45 countries, and contributed to the establishment of national human rights institutions in eight countries.

3. In its resolution 66/169, the General Assembly also recognized the role played by national human rights institutions in their engagement with the United Nations human rights mechanisms. In the period under review, national human rights institutions were active before and during the sessions of the Human Rights Council, delivering statements, submitting written documentation, participating in general debates and under specific agenda items, organizing parallel events and interacting with the special procedures. National human rights institutions also interacted with treaty bodies by submitting reports, briefing the treaty bodies prior to country review or attending sessions.

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/169, welcomed the important role played by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in close cooperation with OHCHR in assisting Governments in the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles. It further encouraged national institutions, including Ombudsman and mediator institutions, to seek accreditation status through the International Coordinating Committee. In its capacity as secretariat of the International Coordinating Committee, OHCHR facilitated and provided support to its 26th annual general meeting in May 2013. It also provided secretariat support to the meeting of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the International Coordinating Committee, in May 2013.

II. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and national human rights institutions

A. Advisory services

5. OHCHR continued to assist Governments in establishing and strengthening human rights institutions by providing technical assistance, in particular through

comparative analysis, needs assessment and evaluation missions, and legal advice on constitutional and legislative frameworks regarding the nature, functions, powers and responsibilities of national human rights institutions.

6. During the period under review, OHCHR provided advice and/or assistance to strengthen national human rights institutions in Argentina, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Congo, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine and Yemen.

7. OHCHR also provided assistance to activities aimed at the establishment of national human rights institutions in Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Lithuania, Myanmar, the Niger and Uruguay.

1. Africa

8. During the period under review, OHCHR supported activities related to national human rights institutions carried out by its Regional Offices for Central, East, Southern and West Africa, its country offices in Guinea, Togo and Uganda, the human rights advisers to the United Nations country teams in Chad, the Great Lakes region, Kenya, Madagascar, the Niger and Rwanda, and the human rights components of the United Nations missions in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan.

Legal advice

9. In December 2012, a law on the establishment of a national human rights institution in Côte d'Ivoire was adopted. In collaboration with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), OHCHR support was key for the adoption of this enabling legislation and for the appointment of the commissioners, in May 2013.

10. Also in December 2012, a law establishing a human rights commission was adopted by the National Assembly of Benin, based on OHCHR advocacy and legal advice. OHCHR also provided advice on an implementing decree currently under consideration by the Government.

11. At the request of the Government of Cape Verde, the OHCHR West Africa Regional Office provided advice on the law that consolidated existing institutions into one national human rights institution.

12. In April 2013, OHCHR held a technical working meeting to finalize a draft amendment to the organic law on the National Human Rights Commission of Togo to include the mandate of the national preventive mechanism .

13. Further to the recommendation of the Subcommittee on Accreditation in March 2012 that the National Human Rights Commission of Rwanda be downgraded to B status, OHCHR provided advice on the amendments to its founding legislation promulgated on 8 April 2013. OHCHR assistance allowed the National Human

Rights Commission to apply for reaccreditation and to retain its A status in May 2013.

14. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the law establishing the National Human Rights Commission, adopted by the Parliament on 6 December 2012, was promulgated on 21 March 2013, as the result of OHCHR advocacy, in cooperation with the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in Congo. OHCHR is also contributing to ongoing consultations with civil society organizations aimed at identifying suitable candidates for commissioners.

15. Since the Senegalese Human Rights Committee was downgraded to B status in November 2012, and in order to assist the institution to address the concerns raised by the Subcommittee on Accreditation, OHCHR held, on 19 and 21 June 2013, a workshop focused on amendments to the Committee's funding legislation and on a plan of action to implement it.

Capacity-building activities

16. The OHCHR Central Africa Regional Office organized a meeting on 31 May 2013 in Yaoundé, for national human rights institution Chairs in the subregion, with the aim of consolidating and operationalizing the Network of Central African National Human Rights Institutions. The Central Africa Regional Office is preparing two workshops, to be held before September 2013, on capacity-building for national human rights institutions members and staff on economic, cultural and social rights.

17. In March 2013, the National Human Rights Commission of Togo conducted, with OHCHR financial and technical support, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis to identify strategic objectives and to elaborate a draft plan of action to be implemented in 2013.

18. In April 2013, OHCHR, in collaboration with the regional office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, carried out a training session for the Uganda Human Rights Commission on witness protection. OHCHR also supported the Uganda Human Rights Commission with guidance on documenting serious human rights violations committed during the northern Uganda conflict.

19. Following its support for the adoption, on 24 August 2012, of the law establishing the National Human Rights Commission of the Niger, OHCHR provided advice on the appointment of commissioners, on 26 April 2013, and the election of Bureau members, on 24 May 2013. In preparation for an induction training to be held in September 2013, OHCHR is providing advice on the development of the institutional infrastructure of the Commission.

20. In March 2013, the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Burundi started to implement, with advice from OHCHR, a project for Burundian refugees repatriated from the United Republic of Tanzania on the modalities of their institutional and legal protection in Burundi.

21. With the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in the Comoros, OHCHR provided technical assistance to the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms in its preparation for the universal periodic review of Comoros, to be held in January and February 2014. At a capacity-building workshop for its members and for representatives of civil society organizations, held from 3 to 5 June 2013, the National Commission identified key areas that will be included in

its universal periodic review contribution. The workshop was an opportunity to train members of the National Commission on how to apply for accreditation to the International Coordinating Committee.

22. In Burkina Faso, new members of the National Human Rights Commission were appointed in October 2012 and were sworn in on March 2013, six years after the term of the outgoing members expired. During that long hiatus, the Commission failed to apply for reaccreditation within the timeframe required by the statute of the International Coordinating Committee, and consequently lost its membership in the International Coordinating Committee. OHCHR is providing technical support to the new members for the strengthening of the institutional and operational capacity of the National Human Rights Commission.

2. The Americas and the Caribbean

Capacity-building activities

23. During the period under review, OHCHR supported activities related to national human rights institutions carried out by its Regional Offices for South America and Central America, its country offices in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico, the human rights advisers to the United Nations country teams in Ecuador, Honduras and Paraguay, and the human rights component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

24. Since April 2013, OHCHR has provided technical assistance and guidance to the national human rights institution in Panama for the development of an internal Protocol on how to identify and address cases of discrimination. In 2012, OHCHR also supported the national human rights institution of Panama in organizing dialogues with indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. These dialogues have been a key step in the process of confidence-building between the national human rights institution and indigenous and Afro-descendant groups.

25. In September 2012, as part of its activities undertaken in cooperation with the Chilean national human rights institution to promote the establishment of a national preventive mechanism, OHCHR participated in a seminar on prisons organized by the national human rights institution and gave a presentation during the panel on the national preventive mechanism. In this context and in the framework of its continuing support to the Government and the national human rights institution to address human rights challenges affecting the prison system, OHCHR and the Chilean national human rights institution undertook two monitoring visits to prisons in Santiago, in December 2012, o follow up on visits undertaken in July 2012, and to monitor progress made by these detention centres in implementing recommendations contained in the respective visit reports. In March 2013, OHCHR held a training course for the staff of the Chilean national human rights institution in preparation for the second universal periodic review cycle.

26. OHCHR implemented joint activities with the provincial-level human rights institution of Buenos Aires, in December 2012, including the official closing of the campaign "I declare myself a human rights defender".

27. In Uruguay, in April 2013, OHCHR held a training course for national human rights institution members and their staff in preparation for the second universal periodic review cycle. The course focused on supporting the national human rights institution in submitting a universal periodic review report.

28. In Colombia, in May 2013, OHCHR undertook a comprehensive assessment to identify strengths and gaps in the functioning of the Ombudsman Office after 20 years of its existence. Recommendations were issued to address challenges faced by the Office with regard to its crucial role in the implementation of the Victims' and Land Restitution Law.

29. During the period under review, OHCHR continued providing technical assistance to the Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos of Guatemala, with regard to two amicus curiae it presented to the Constitutional Court related to the international obligations of States on the right to consultation. OHCHR also carried out capacity-building activities on the rights of migrants, indigenous peoples and older persons, as well as advocacy activities, together with the Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with regard to a bill aimed at lowering the age of criminal responsibility for minors. OHCHR provided technical assistance to prepare a methodology to map social conflicts, including analysing their root causes, common patterns and the responsibilities of States

30. In cooperation with the Human Rights Section of MINUSTAH, OHCHR provided financial support for the recruitment of two new staff members for the Citizens' Protection Office of Haiti for the period from January to September 2013, in order to facilitate the decentralization strategy of the Office. The two staff members have oversight responsibility for the regional offices of Les Cayes and Cap-Haitien.

31. On 30 April 2013, OHCHR, jointly with MINUSTAH and the Citizens' Protection Office, officially launched a six-month training-for trainers programme for 15 staff members of the Office, which is aimed at developing monitoring, investigation, reporting and advocacy skills of the Office staff.

32. The nine Citizens' Protection Office staff who were recruited in 2012 through OHCHR funds enabled the Office to decentralize its services and to publish its combined 2009-2012 report in March 2013.

3. Asia and the Pacific region

33. During the period under review, OHCHR supported activities related to national human rights institutions carried out by its Regional Offices for Central Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific region, its office in Cambodia, the human rights advisers to the United Nations country teams in the Maldives, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, and the human rights components of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Legal advice

34. In May 2013, OHCHR, in consultation with the Asia Pacific Forum of national human rights institutions, continued to support the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission in the development of its enabling law. The draft has been prepared in consultation with relevant ministries and other stakeholders, and is expected to be submitted to Parliament.

Capacity-building activities

35. OHCHR also supported the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission by holding seminars in Yangon, Myanmar, in January and April 2013, for civil society actors to facilitate dialogue with members of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on its protection activities, and engagement between these stakeholders. OHCHR further contributed to training workshops for senior-level Government officials organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in Yangon on 27 and 28 May 2013, and on the Human Rights Council universal periodic review in Nay Pyi Taw, on 13 and 14 June 2013.

36. In the Philippines, OHCHR assisted the National Human Rights Commission in various initiatives, including the establishment of a tripartite national monitoring mechanism composed of the Government, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society that will provide a framework for prioritization of the universal periodic review Myanmar National Human Rights Commission universal periodic review follow-up action to be undertaken at the national level; the establishment of a national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture; and the deployment of a temporary mission, in May 2013, to assess, investigate and document the human rights situation of Filipinos affected by the conflict in Sabah, Malaysia.

4. Europe and Central Asia

37. During the period under review, OHCHR supported activities related to national human rights institutions carried out by its Regional Offices for Europe and Central Asia, its office in Kosovo, the human rights advisers in Albania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the human rights adviser of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

Legal advice

38. OHCHR provided technical advice for the amendment of the law establishing the People's Advocate of Moldova.

Capacity-building activities

39. In Kosovo, in view of the Assembly's appointment of the Ombudsman in early 2014, OHCHR provides advice for members and staff of Parliament on the methodology and selection criteria for the Ombudsman.

40. During the reporting period, OHCHR financed the project "Monitoring and reporting on the work of the Ombudsman institution", which is run by the NGO Youth Initiative for Human Rights, in close collaboration with the Ombudsman of Kosovo. The main goal of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the Ombudsman Office by increasing its efficiency and transparency in order to better respond to rights-holders' needs.

41. After the Parliament of Ukraine adopted, on 2 October 2012, amendments to the Ombudsman law expanding the powers of this institution to fulfil the mandate of a national preventive mechanism, OHCHR provided training for the Ombudsman staff under a joint OHCHR-UNDP initiative.

42. On 10 December 2012, the Ombudsman Office of Ukraine hosted public hearings on the second universal periodic review of Ukraine, held on 24 October 2012. OHCHR was requested to provide an analysis of recommendations made to Ukraine and contributed to discussions designed to outline possible national mechanisms to implement accepted recommendations. OHCHR encouraged the inclusion in the Ombudsman Strategic Plan of Activities (2013-2017) support to the implementation of decisions of United Nations human rights mechanisms. For better coordination of the United Nations country team activities related to national human rights institutions, OHCHR set up, in January 2013, a United Nations country team working group to support the Ombudsman.

43. The OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia held a training session, in cooperation with UNDP, on human rights and gender mainstreaming when drafting legislation. This activity increased the understanding of the staff of the Kyrgyzstan Ombudsman Office of the international human rights framework, and on how to analyse compliance of domestic laws with applicable international standards and constitutional provisions.

44. On 12 and 13 February 2013, OHCHR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Bishkek, and other partners organized a training in Osh on effective follow-up to allegations of torture in judicial proceedings as a guarantee of fair trial. The training increased the understanding of the Ombudsman staff regarding torture prevention and strengthened their skills to use United Nations human rights recommendations in their daily monitoring work and in their responses to complaints. In March 2013, OHCHR held a training for the Kyrgyzstan Ombudsman Office on human rights monitoring and reporting and, in May 2013, a training on monitoring and protecting of housing, land and property rights.

45. In Tajikistan, OHCHR continued to support the strengthening of the Ombudsman Office through advocacy for the establishment of a national preventive mechanism, the handling of individual human rights complaints and follow-up to the national universal periodic review implementation plan. In 2012, several activities took place within the framework of the United Nations joint programme involving UNDP, OHCHR, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to strengthen the capacity of the Ombudsman institution in fulfilling its mandate in the areas of gender, refugees, migration, labour and child rights, non-discrimination, interviewing of victims of torture and other serious human rights violations.

5. Middle East and North Africa

46. During the period under review, OHCHR supported activities related to national human rights institutions carried out by its Regional Offices for the Middle East and for North Africa, the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre in Qatar, its offices in Mauritania, the State of Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen, UNAMI and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

Legal advice

47. OHCHR was involved in efforts aimed at establishing an independent and effective national human rights commission in Tunisia. In that context, on 25 May 2013, it organized, with the Higher Committee for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Tunisia, a workshop on the Paris Principles for the benefit of the members of the Higher Committee. It contributed to a round table on the reform of the law regulating the Higher Committee for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, held on 23 May 2013,

48. In follow-up to the OHCHR technical assessment mission to Bahrain in December 2012, OHCHR provided advice on the laws and other decrees establishing and modifying the human rights institution.

49. In November 2012, OHCHR provided comments on the proposed national human rights institution law in Yemen. On 29 and 30 May 2013, OHCHR participated in a meeting, held by UNDP, aimed at raising the awareness of stakeholders in Yemen on the Paris Principles and OHCHR written advice on the draft law.

50. OHCHR provided technical assistance for the drafting of a national human rights institution law in Lebanon, which is to be considered by Parliament.

Capacity-building activities

51. The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre in Qatar, in collaboration with the Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights, conducted a training programme, from 23 to 27 December 2012, in Amman, on the use of United Nations human rights mechanisms and the United Nations human rights protection system for 21 junior diplomats.

52. In January 2013, OHCHR provided feedback and analysis on a training-of-trainers programme, developed by a regional NGO, for the staff of the Qatar National Human Rights Committee. OHCHR reviewed the training materials submitted during the training and extended technical advice on the methodology and topics.

53. The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre and the Qatar National Human Rights Committee have been working with NGOs to develop a questionnaire to measure the perception of women rights in the Qatari society.

54. Two members of the Bahraini institution attended a training on national human rights institutions organized by the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre, in Qatar, in April 2013.

55. In March 2013, OHCHR and UNDP conducted a needs assessment mission for capacity-building of the Iraqi national institution.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights support to regional and subregional initiatives by national human rights institutions

1. Africa

56. The OHCHR West Africa Regional Office provided support to the 2013 annual general assembly of the Network of National Human Rights Institutions of West Africa, organized from 24 to 26 April 2013 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, in collaboration with the Network of National Human Rights Institutions of West Africa and executive secretariat and the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission. The general assembly was preceded by a workshop on human rights monitoring and reporting to enhance the capacity of national human rights institution staff in monitoring, investigating and documenting human rights violations. The workshop also focused on how to access ECOWAS institutions, in particular the Community Court of Justice and Parliament, to address human rights issues and cases.

2. Asia and the Pacific region

57. In February 2013, the OHCHR Regional Office for the Pacific Region organized a universal periodic review follow-up seminar in Bangkok, attended by representatives of five A-status national human rights institutions from the South-East Asia subregion, who shared their lessons learned and experiences from the first cycle of the universal periodic review with Governments and civil society representatives. OHCHR also supported a regional universal periodic review event organized by UNDP, in June 2013, that brought together Governments, civil society and national human rights institution representatives from Asia and the Pacific region.

3. Europe and Central Asia

58. The OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia worked to strengthen the capacity of national human rights institutions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to monitor and protect the right to adequate housing. A regional training workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan, brought together national human rights institution staff from these countries, along with civil society representatives, to discuss key issues and challenges and share experiences relating to housing, land and property rights.

4. Middle East and North Africa

59. The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre in Qatar, in cooperation with the Qatari National Human Rights Committee and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, organized a training workshop, held on 31 March and 1 April 2013, on access by national institutions to international human rights mechanisms, in particular through the universal periodic review and treaty bodies. Representatives of the national human rights institutions of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, the Sudan and Tunisia participated in the workshop. The workshop focused on the application of the Paris Principles, the relationship of human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions and enhancing

knowledge of international human rights mechanisms and the recommendations of the universal periodic review.

60. On 3 and 4 June 2013, OHCHR participated in a regional conference held on the theme "Developing the human rights system of the Arab League", which was attended by more than 50 international and local NGOs, Government representatives and independent experts, and national human rights institutions from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and the Sudan. The purpose of the conference was to prepare a proposal on the development of standards and mechanisms of the League of Arab States in the field of human rights. OHCHR presented a working paper on its support in developing regional human rights mechanisms.

61. On 15 and 16 June 2013, in Rabat, OHCHR participated in the 9th annual meeting of Arab national human rights institutions on transitional justice in order to raise the awareness of national human rights institutions about their role with regard to transitional justice mechanisms.

C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights support to the International Coordinating Committee and its Subcommittee on Accreditation

1. International Coordinating Committee

62. As the secretariat of the International Coordinating Committee, OHCHR facilitated and provided support to the 26th annual general meeting of the Committee, held in Geneva from 6 to 8 May 2013. The meeting was attended by representatives of national human rights institutions, Governments, regional and cross-regional national human rights institution associations, NGOs and academia.

63. The agenda of the 26th meeting included discussions on planning for the future in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Plan Action; the Paris Principles and the International Coordinating Committee; the report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders; follow-up to the 2012 Amman Declaration and Plan of Action; and the role of national human rights institutions in the post-2015 development agenda.

2. Subcommittee on Accreditation

64. In May 2013, OHCHR provided secretariat support to the meeting of the Subcommittee on Accreditation. As at November 2012, 69 national human rights institutions were accredited with "A status" by the International Coordinating Committee((see A/HRC/23/28). In order to strengthen its working methods, the Subcommittee developed new General Observations on national human rights institutions serving as national monitoring/preventive mechanisms; the quasi-judicial competency of national human rights institutions; and assessing the performance of national human rights institutions.

III. Cooperation between United Nations human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions

A. Human Rights Council

65. Cooperation between national human rights institutions and international and regional human rights mechanisms is a requirement of the Paris Principles. OHCHR, in coordination with the International Coordinating Committee, continued to support the engagement of national human rights institutions with the Human Rights Council mechanisms.

66. In 2013, national human rights institutions were active before and during the sessions of the Human Rights Council delivering statements, submitting written documentation, participating in general debates and under specific agenda items, organizing parallel events and interacting with the special procedures.

B. Treaty bodies

67. OHCHR continued to support the participation of national human rights institutions in the sessions of the treaty bodies. OHCHR liaised with national human rights institutions prior to each session to encourage them to provide written or oral information and to attend the sessions. OHCHR disseminated relevant recommendations and concluding observations to the institutions concerned.

68. In the period 2012-2013, out of 148 States parties that were examined by human rights treaty bodies, 94 had established a national human rights institution. Of these 96 institutions,[1] 49 interacted with treaty bodies by submitting reports, briefing the treaty bodies prior to the review or attending the sessions. There has been an increase in the participation of national human rights institutions in the past three years: in 2009, 36 out of 69 institutions engaged with treaty bodies.

69. Treaty bodies provide national human rights institutions with advice and tools to conduct their activities, including by issuing general comments, information notes and statements, and by inviting the institutions to their meetings. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted general comments on national human rights institutions. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination amended its rules of procedure to allow A-status institutions to address the Committee in plenary session, and the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities included in their guidelines a section on the participation of national human rights institutions in their review sessions.

70. During the reporting period, in conformity with article 11 (b) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or

[1] One national human rights institution per state and three national human rights institutions in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Punishment provided advice and assistance to national human rights institutions on issues related to national preventive mechanisms.

C. Special procedures

71. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar continued to consult the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on its protection activities, including investigations and complaints, and brought specific concerns to the attention of the Commission.

72. The Ombudsman of Guatemala engaged with the special rapporteurs visiting Guatemala in 2013 by preparing, with the support of OHCHR, preliminary reports for their visits.

D. Universal periodic review

73. National human rights institutions have been increasingly engaging with the universal periodic review. Since the beginning of the second cycle, there has been an increase in written contributions from national human rights institutions for the universal periodic review stakeholders' reports prepared by OHCHR.

74. During the adoption by the Council of the final outcomes of the first 28 States reviewed for the second time, 11 A-status national human rights institutions delivered statements on the review of their countries.

IV. Conclusions

A. States

75. **States are encouraged to implement the recommendations made by their national human rights institutions.**

76. **States are encouraged to establish a national human rights institution where none exists, and to strengthen the structures and independence of existing ones in order to enable the effective fulfilment of their mandate, taking into account the recommendations made by the Subcommittee on Accreditation and the advice provided by OHCHR.**

77. **States are encouraged to ensure that national human rights institutions are provided with a broad mandate to protect and promote all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights; with adequate powers of investigation regarding allegations of human rights violations; and with an authorization to visit detention centres.**

78. **Members and staff of national human rights institutions should enjoy immunity while discharging their functions in good faith.**

79. **States are encouraged to take necessary measures to protect members and staff of national human rights institutions against threats and harassment and to investigate such cases.**

80. **States are encouraged to provide national human rights institutions with adequate human and financial resources, as well as the necessary autonomy to propose and manage their own budgets and recruit their own staff members.**

81. **Open, participatory and pluralistic processes are important when establishing or strengthening national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles, in particular for the selection and appointment of their members and staff.**

82. **Budget cuts have affected the capacity of OHCHR to contribute to the establishment of national human rights institutions and to ensure their compliance with the Paris Principles, in particular, its secretariat support for the International Coordinating Committee and its Subcommittee on Accreditation. Member States are therefore urged to ensure by their financial contributions to the Office the continuation of efficient, high-quality assistance for the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions and the servicing of the International Coordinating Committee.**

B. National human rights institutions

83. **The Paris Principles call on national human rights institutions to engage with the international human rights system and regional mechanisms. Therefore, the institutions are encouraged to continue engaging with these bodies and to promote the implementation of their recommendations.**

84. **National human rights institutions are encouraged to continue to advocate for their independent participation in meetings of United Nations human rights mechanisms.**

85. **National human rights institutions are encouraged to continue to develop, and to advocate for the development of, protective measures and mechanisms for human rights defenders, and to disseminate information thereon.**

86. **National human rights institutions are encouraged to develop cooperation with civil society organizations, and to strengthen the latter's capacity in order to enable them to meaningfully participate in the promotion and protection of human rights.**

87. **National human rights institutions are encouraged to implement the Amman Declaration and Programme of Action on the promotion and protection of human rights of women and girls, adopted at the International Conference of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, in Jordan in November 2012.**

88. **National human rights institutions are encouraged to seek constructive cooperation with other State bodies to ensure that human rights issues are taken into consideration in policies and programmes, and addressed through the adoption of adequate measures.**

89. **National human rights institutions working in crisis or conflict situations are encouraged to be vigilant and proactive in protecting the rights of persons affected by such circumstances, in accordance with the Paris Principles.**

Annex

Engagement of national human rights institutions in the work of the treaty bodies (April 2012-March 2013)

Committee	*Number of States parties reviewed*	*Number of States parties with a national human rights institution*	*Submission of information*	*Briefing*	*Attendance*
Committee on Torture	17	11	7	6	6
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	28	22	9	5	7
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	12	10	6	6	7
Human Rights Committee	16	11	4	4	4
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	35	15	5	2	3
Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	4	3	0	1	1
Committee on the Rights of the Child	32	21	7	5	5
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	2	2	2	1	1
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	4	3	1	0	0
Total	**150**	**98**	**41**	**30**	**34**